

## I a preface to a prolegomenon

This paper is part of a larger project which reprises the genre of the prolegomenon. A prolegomenon defines a project and the conditions which make such a project both necessary and possible. "The Victory of Culture" is intended to be a prolegomenon to one possible future cultural studies, a cultural studies capable of responding to and saying something useful about the contemporary emergent organization of power and the role of culture within it, from a particular position within it.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, I want to begin by describing the conditions to which this project imagines itself as a response. If cultural studies always attempts to construct itself as a response to the demands of its context, the shape that cultural studies takes will always depend on how those producing it hear and understand those demands, and on their abilities to respond. This is less a matter of identities and personalities than of institutional possibilities and discursive resources. I want to locate my project then by offering an explicit if brief description of the contemporary context of cultural studies, as I understand it, as the articulation of a number of historical developments (and theoretical challenges). Some of these developments are not, in the first instance, cultural. They include: a multidimensional globalization which cuts across social, institutional and everyday life; the economization (capitalization) of everything including the social (in the name of the market, choice and growth); the reorganization of capitalism as a system of both accumulation and economic sectors; and the reconstitution of a complex, contradictory, and highly strategic conservative movement.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, some of these developments directly implicate cultural discourses and practices. First, we have to take account of the growing power of and investment in a politics organized around modern (cultural) notions of identity and difference. This requires in part understanding the geohistorical mechanisms by which relations have been constructed as differences and politics organized by identities. But the fact that this is where people are should only define the starting point of our reflections, for

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there are also limits to this organization of politics and power. In fact, given where the modern project of identity has arrived, it is at least worth questioning whether it is reasonable to continue following the same path. There are at least some grounds for arguing that a politics built around modern conceptions of identity is insufficient for meeting the demands of the contemporary political, economic and social world. At the very least, the category of identity needs to be deconstructed, but I doubt that simply de-essentializing the category is sufficient. At the very least, a more productive notion of identity has to be offered.<sup>3</sup>

An alternative (what I will call countermodern) politics might begin by separating struggles against particular regimes of power (racist, sexist, homophobic, ageist, etc.), which can be understood as struggles over the distribution and legitimation of particular practices, from struggles to articulate new organizations of identity, identification and belonging. The latter involves the mechanisms and modalities of belonging, affiliation and identification which define the places

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people can belong to, and the places people can find their way to. That is, the real issue is the mechanism by which identity is produced as what it is; we have to move from asking what identity is to how it is produced, which then opens up the possibility of imagining alternative mechanisms, and alternative realities. Then identity can become more of a way of thinking about the possibilities of a politics that recognizes and is organized around the positivity or singularity of the other.

Second, cultural studies has to respond to the increasing importance, both theoretically and politically, of the asignifying, whether understood as the material, the body or affect. Here we might begin simply by recognizing how little theorizing has been done around these planes/modalities of existence. North Atlantic modernity has always recognized that there is something else to human existence beyond the epistemological but it always assigns this excess to the domain of the irrational, the unstructured, the unmappable (e.g., as desire or creativity). Thus when they are talked about, they are either immediately reconfigured into the realm of representation, or they are treated as the concrete, the particular, the atheoretical. As a result, much of contemporary cultural theory and criticism assumes a binary opposition between affect, the body, materiality and the concrete on the one side, and ideology, subjectivity, consciousness and theory on the other. This question is, it seems to me, connected to one of the most striking lacunae in contemporary cultural studies: its apparent inability to address the political crisis of ecology in significant and compelling ways.

Third, culture seems to have replaced politics and even economics at the center of public discourse and people's "mattering maps." It appears that cultural issues dominate the national agenda (at least in the United States), and Paul du Gay argues that business discourse is increasingly preoccupied with cultural matters.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, increasingly, economics and politics are becoming cultural issues, matters of experience – for example, do you feel better off? – rather than of objective conditions. Another example is provided by the emergence of a discourse of foreign

policy which sees present and future conflicts defined less by state or even ideological interest and more by "culture" (which is somehow linked to historical civilizations, religions and ethnicities). At the same time, the discourse of culture is becoming an explicit site for arguments about the malleability of people's lives. Frow and Morris, for example, point to the emergence of a discourse which makes culture the preferred explanation for the failure of particular national economies. In this discourse, "changing the culture" becomes a shorthand way of challenging the conduct of people's lives.<sup>5</sup>

Fourth, there is something extremely odd about the contemporary operation of ideology which increasingly depends on becoming conscious of itself. There is an increasingly cynical inflection to the logic of ideology. If, according to Marx, ideology could be described as: "they don't know what they are doing but they are doing it anyway," Žižek proposes that the contemporary relation to ideology is: "they know what they are doing but they are doing it anyway."<sup>6</sup> Although numerous commentators have tried to describe this new inflection as cynicism, it is, at the very least, a cynicism saturated with irony. And it is closely related to what Stuart Hall has described as a hegemonic politics, a politics built on consent to leadership rather than consensus around policy.<sup>7</sup> It is an administrative rather than an ideological hegemony, an electoral politics built on people's willingness to support parties and candidates even though they do not share their beliefs and commitments. I do not believe that these developments are free-floating as it were; instead they are tied to a broader project aimed at producing a regime of political apathy for significant fractions of the population, in part by undermining any shared sense of the nature, effectivities and modalities of agency (or, in cultural studies terms, articulation).

In the context of these developments, I am inclined to agree with Bill Readings' argument that the emerging global system of capitalism no longer seems to require "a cultural content in terms of which to interpellate and manage subjects" even in the face of the extraordinary quantitative and spatial expansion of popular culture.<sup>8</sup>

In other words, cultural capital<sup>9</sup> no longer matters to the powers that be, any more than economic capital matters. Instead, capitalism is only committed to "monetary subjects without money" who are merely "the shadow of money's substance."<sup>10</sup> Readings goes on to argue that if the sphere of the ideological has become visible (not only in critical theory and the academy but literally everywhere), this is because it is not where the real game is being played anymore. Power in the contemporary world seems to be budding structures of subordination based directly on economic and political strategies, and representational strategies are only locally and occasionally deployed in these struggles. That is, power in the world looks like it is in some ways returning to Foucault's juridicodiscursive system (and away from governmentality and discipline) except that now, it is not built on simple and direct violence (against the body of the criminal although it may be working toward that) and it is certainly not spectacular. Notice that this seems to contradict the first observation, but I think the contradiction is more apparent than real.

The question is, how do we go about imagining a cultural studies capable of responding to these conditions. But the question can also be reversed: what is it about the conjuncture of these conditions that makes the available formations of cultural studies relatively ineffective? What distance do they measure out that has rendered the very concept of culture – as it has operated in the constitution of cultural studies – problematic? Does this distance require us to rethink "the very basis of modern thinking about what constitutes change"<sup>11</sup> as well as the relation between politics and ethics?

In the second half of this preface, I want to outline the argument, at least as I envision it at the moment, of this prolegomenon. The terms of my argument are, I am afraid, both deceptively simple and overly obtuse: If the concept of culture is an invention of European or North Atlantic (to follow Gilroy<sup>12</sup>) "modernity," it might be fruitful for progressive cultural theorists to inquire into its place in the complex economy (apparatuses of capitalism and the state, machines of power, discourses of knowl-

edge and value) of this formation. To put it another way, I take North Atlantic modernity to describe a contradictory and multiple project to constitute a particular sort of individuality within a field of cultural, political and economic tensions marked through the emerging forces of science, capitalism, nationalism, globalism and colonialism (both external and internal), as well as the emergence of civil societies and mass popular cultures.<sup>13</sup> I want to ask how the very concept of culture enabled the particular forms that modernity (and all of its aspects) took in the North Atlantic. I want to ask what the concept does in this formation of modernity, what its power is as it were, without necessarily creating a narrative of complicity. It is not so much that as cultural theorists we are caught up in the very discourses we are attempting to reconfigure, but that the political challenges facing us as progressive cultural theorists seem to demand that we revisit the discourse of culture itself if we are to open up the possibility of alternative or counter-modernities.

I want to map North Atlantic modernity by using the category of culture – as a theoretical/critical concept, a mundane signifier which identifies a particular set of social practices, and a site of political and everyday activity – as my entrance point and my compass. This is different than claiming that it is somehow necessarily central. It is rather to assume that "culture" serves as a point of articulation around which a number of the trajectories of modernity have been captured, oriented and organized. It is as if "culture" serves to articulate these vectors, interrupting and bending them into its own spaces and sending them off in new and unexpected directions. In particular, I am interested in the way three distinct but interrelated "regimes" come together in the space of culture, shaping it and each other in such a way as to define both the "interiority" of that space and the ways in which modern individualities can move beyond it. These regimes are not only part of the self-conscious thought of modernity (constituting what I call the "logics of modernism"); they are as well a part of the technologies of modernization and the banalities of modern everyday life.

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In fact, I would argue that it is part of the power of culture that it articulates these three moments of the modern.

The power of culture is then defined by the ability of its discourse to capture three other discourses, and its victory is constituted by the articulation of these regimes into three specific and dominant logics: the logic of temporality and "the victory of history"; the logic of negativity and "the victory of difference"; and the logic of mediation and "the victory of ideology." Of course, in challenging these victories, the point is not to reject the terms of the victory (history, difference and ideology) as if these could be simply negated, but the terms of the victory itself (i.e., the logics which give shape to the consequences of the claim of victory). But this poses a very real rhetorical difficulty which has to be confronted. Each logic constructs an apparent opposition (time and space, negativity and positivity, ideology and reality) and then seems to privilege the former term. In this way, each logic controls the very paths by which we might seek to escape its determinations: we can choose to privilege the second term but that reproduces the logic of negativity; or we can choose to refuse the dichotomy and talk instead of space-time (as dimensionality), of the production of the positive out of the negative (as dialectics or difference) and of the social construction of reality but each of these reproduces the logic of mediation. It seems to me that this is part of the power of the modern discourse of culture: once you are in it, it is almost impossible to find a vector out of its space that does not lead you right back in.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps this explains why Derrida assumes that there is no way out of logocentrism. But I think we have to assume that such vectors are possible: after all, the vast majority of human societies have not lived within the space of North Atlantic modernity. But the rhetorical problem remains and one has to act by discursive fiat as it were, hoping that one's interlocutors will be patient and interested enough to allow the vector to traverse enough space. And so in the course of my argument I will speak of the possibility of counter-modern logics: of spatiality (and the possible victory of becoming), of positivity (and the pos-

sible victory of singularity), and of reality (and the possible victory of expression or constructionism). It is important that these counter-modern possibilities are neither pre- nor post-modern, since such temporal dichotomies would precisely replicate a constitutive commitment of North Atlantic modernity.

There is a second layer of complexity that makes it difficult to talk about these three logics, since each one reshapes and redirects the other two so that, in the end, it is only by an act of analytic will that the critic can separate them: for example, the modern notion of mediation as social constructionism is reworked in crucial ways by the logics of both temporality and negativity (both in the form of interiority and under the sign of lack). Despite these difficulties, I want to say something about each of these three logics. I have already written about "the victory of history" through a logic of temporality.<sup>15</sup> Obviously, in North Atlantic modernity, both reality and human existence (as consciousness and *socius*) are understood historically and power is understood primarily through tropes of reproduction over time. The result is that space becomes little more than the interruption of difference in the form of geographical specificity. Space is rarely theorized and even more rarely recognized as active and productive. Even in the contemporary literature which attempts to deny its passivity, this is done not in the name of a spatial agency or the spatiality of becoming but as the site of another agency. That is, at its best, space is incorporated into (rather than excluded from) the register of temporality. I have tried to suggest that a counter-modern logic might begin by assuming a space that is already temporalized as trajectories of becoming (rather than as the continuities and discontinuities of time which have to be traced onto empirical space). To put this another way, reality can be mapped only by following the vectors or lines along which the effectivity of any event (or individuality) – its ability to affect and be affected – is actualized.

The logic of negativity and the victory of identity/difference might also be described as the logic of a theory of sets in which a set cannot be a member of itself.<sup>16</sup> The result of this act of

exclusion is the construction of a boundary which marks the necessary existence of a constitutive negation or difference (interiority versus exteriority, identity versus difference). Of course, different versions of this discursive logic may understand constitution in different ways (as simple negation, as dialectical negation, as productive negation, etc.) but the result is always an attempt to define the space of a set and the limit of its ability to define itself. Moreover, I think that there are at least three variations of this logic of negativity – identity/difference, interiority/exteriority, and essentialism/antiessentialism – although I do not want to claim that these three variations of the logic of negativity are equivalent such that they can be directly traced onto one another; but I do believe that they are all variations of the same theme, the products of a logic of negativity, the consequences of a boundary which is in the first instance an act of negation of the outside rather than a mode of opening up to it.<sup>17</sup> Consider, for example, the debate between essentialism and antiessentialism: while it might seem reasonable to assume that only the antiessentialist positive relies on the negative, the essentialist position (like the very category of identity) is committed to finding a definition of the set which can be located internally to the set itself; otherwise, the third-man argument threatens the coherence of any possible definition. There must be a definition that simultaneously unites all the members of the set while excluding (negating) any individual outside of the set.

If the modern logic of sets assumes that two negatives produce (or equal) a positive, a countermodern logic will argue that positivity (the real which includes both the virtual and the actual) produces negativity; a countermodern logic of positivity makes boundaries productive rather than constitutive, constructing a theory of sets without identities or differences, based on economies of affiliation and belonging, on exteriorities rather than interiorities. It would substitute the singularity and otherness of individualities for struggles over the identity and difference of individuals.<sup>18</sup> It would seek a theory of positivity without essentialism, and of

negation without negativity (or *ressentiment*). And it would operate by a practice of articulation that goes beyond antiessentialism without negating it, that is, an anti-antiessentialism.

In this paper, however, I want to turn my attention to the third logic and outline in some greater detail – but still only sketch out the argument – the place of “the logic of mediation” at the center of the modern category of culture. The logic of mediation creates the unavoidable problem of “the last instance that never comes” insofar as the actual deterraining power of reality itself is always deferred. Just as Comte criticized theology and metaphysics for presupposing that causality always remains just beyond the threshold of human perception, I want to suggest that the logic of mediation reproduces a metaphysical gap in the very heart of epistemology.

I want to make it clear that I am not equating the concept of mediation and the logic of mediation. By calling the logic of mediation into question, I do not mean to deny the reality of mediation itself. The trajectory of effectivity (what I will describe as the way reality constructs and expresses itself) is often mediated by other trajectories and practices, its path interrupted, inflected, and redirected. I mean to affirm the positivity and multiplicity of mediation in the face of a logic which reduces mediation to a single function (the necessary compensation for a lack), a single form (a filter or screen, however productive) and a single mechanism or ontology (an economy of signification, representation and subjectification in the face of a necessary lack). The effects of a practice often take a circuitous route. The logic of mediation is precisely the negation of the reality of such trajectories in favor of a simple and predefined pathway: the human, all too human (i.e., the meaningful or cultural). In the guise of social constructionism, the productivity of the real disappears into the productivity of culture itself.<sup>19</sup> Alternatively, rather than seeing mediation as belonging in some privileged way to culture, I want to assign it back to reality. Culture (or discourse) does not mediate any more or less than any other practice. Signification and representation are merely two modes – and not necessarily the most important

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ones – in the regime of mediation, or even of discursive mediation. The logic of mediation collapses all discourse – art, ideology, common sense, the popular, fantasy, imagination and science – into the single effectivity of meaning and collapses all significance (or meaning in the broadest sense) into the logic of cognitive or semantic meaning.

In this sense, then, my argument does start with a deconstructive practice, following Williams and Foucault. For often, even though an event (in this case, the invention and deployment of the category of culture) might be acknowledged to be both historical and a representation, it soon becomes naturalized in the sense that its political implications are forgotten or erased. In that sense, to deconstruct such an event is to re-place it within the specific and appropriate formations and apparatuses of power. I do not claim to provide an adequate contextualization, only to raise questions and suggest new possibilities.

### II culture and the story of modernity

It is part of the “common wisdom” of modernist theory that the concept of culture was an invention of “the modern” itself, but the explanation for its appearance is ambiguous. On the one hand, the concept defines the emergence and importance of the cultural as a plane or domain of the social formation. That is, the concept reflects the emergence of culture as a historical fact. On the other hand, the concept marks the very ambiguity of what it points to, for the concept operates at the intersection of the processes (modernization), experiences (modernity) and discourses (modernism) that marked its very emergence. Taken together, these accounts suggest that the concept of culture both constitutes and describes the modern. Nevertheless, it is necessary to distinguish two versions of the centrality of culture in the emergence of the modern.

The attraction and ambiguity of the most common story of modernity can be explained by the fact that, in the end, it celebrates North Atlantic modernity as the most advanced, the most human of all possible societies. It begins, rather obsessively, with the need to differentiate itself

from that other (projected into a past) which it now constructed as “traditional society.”<sup>20</sup> Such traditional societies could not think of themselves as traditional, nor could they think of themselves as societies, for it is only in modernity that society itself becomes self-consciously constructed as an object and a project: “Making society into a project – not the polis, or a kingdom or the state, but society – is where Euro-Americanism began. Now in so far as this enterprise was thought to bring a new threshold of awareness... Traditional becomes the epithet applied to those in a state of existence before such awareness.”<sup>21</sup> The break with tradition was located both in the emergence and expansion of capitalism (“bloody capitalism”) and the nation-state, and in the fantasy of a set of sociocultural “ideals” which would define the positive outcome of the former developments: the supposed expansion of reason, of political and intellectual freedom, etc.<sup>22</sup> That is, the construction of society as an object was concomitant with the construction of culture as an isolable sphere of human activity as well. The modern is, thus, constituted by the separation of culture and society.

A second feature of this story of the transition into modernity emphasizes the entrance of the people – first the middle classes and then “the masses” – into the political and cultural spheres as potential actors and agents, thus necessitating the birth and expansion of both civil society and democracy. As a result, power shifted from being primarily a matter of force to one of ideology, from the enactment of violence to a struggle over consensus (hegemonic power constantly re-established through ideological work). Power now had to organize the active participation and support of the population by incorporating more and more of the population into its ever-expanding ideological sphere. Power became a psychological matter of belief and interpretation. The consent to the rule of the dominant fractions was now to be secured by changing the ways that subordinate populations thought about their lives and the world, by making them think and even act, within the limits of their resources, more like the ruling bloc. Thus, with modernity comes ideology as the primary motor of power. Suddenly,

culture has not only entered the scene, it has come to define it as well.

Tony Bennett has described the implicit – and later explicit – theory of ideology operating in this story: ideology involves the centripetal (from the center out) communication of a message through apparently neutral – at least they don't seem to know what they are doing, but they are doing it anyway – institutions and technologies. Ideological communication involves psychological processes that are always and everywhere the same. Bennett argues that these processes are assumed to involve structures of signification and representation on the one hand, and of subjectivity and identity on the other. Finally, the state takes on an educative role alongside its existence as the only legitimate site of force.<sup>23</sup>

There have been many criticisms of this story of modernity but rather than reiterate them here,<sup>24</sup> I want to briefly consider the second story of culture and the transition to modernity; this story seems to offer a very different picture of the nature of the modern category of culture and its role in the emergence of the modern. This Foucauldian story also depends upon a vision of the changing way in which power is exercised, a change which it describes as a transition from juridicodiscursive to governmental power. This is not a move from force to ideology (representation), but from representation to discipline. Tony Bennett describes it as a relative shift “from a conception in which culture served power by in some way embodying, staging or representing it, to a conception of culture as a resource to be used in programmes aimed at the transformation of conduct.”<sup>25</sup> Premodern or juridicodiscursive power was centralized and singular; it sought obedience. And it accomplished this by creating a spectacle of power which enabled the population to see and know power as such. Modern or governmental power is dispersed and multiple. It pursues a variety of ends through a variety of means. It does not make a spectacle of itself but rather hides itself in its very practices and procedures.<sup>26</sup> Rather than making power the object of the people's knowledge, it seeks to make the people the object of its own knowledge, for it seeks to change the behavior of the population in spe-

cific ways through specific and multiple “technologies.”

Zygmunt Bauman tells a similar story: modern power involves an attempt to generalize an elite practice of self-fashioning in order to change the everyday life of its subjects.<sup>27</sup> In this anti-Enlightenment story, what appears often to have been a beneficial cultural crusade was actually a form of political repression. The expansion of education, democratic institutions, etc. were all efforts to modify the conduct of people's lives, to refashion human beings through systems of social and cultural practices. Culture was a technology of power, a crucial component in the project of managing society and everyday life through practices of surveillance, discipline and self-fashioning. It was social control through self-control and self-production. Culture is then the embodiment of “a theory and pragmatics of state power” (Bauman 55). Its political power extended from the professionalization of cultural elites to its endless production of norms. At the same time, Bauman argues that the more restricted realm of culture as art and mediation is privileged as the provenance of the emerging intellectual fraction of the rising middle class.<sup>28</sup>

This second story avoids many of the criticisms that have been raised against the previous one, because ideology *is* but disappears (along with the Enlightenment). Yet it also fails to offer any way to define culture or cultural discourses. Moreover, there is a certain paradox that has to be addressed: for either the apparent importance of ideology and civil society in modern social formations is an illusion (and hence, we fall back upon the very simplest notions of ideological mystification) or it must have some discursive basis. In fact, I would suggest that modern power – governmentality – operates in part through the “ideology of ideology.” That is, the very nature of power in governmentality hides itself in the very claim of the ideological existence of power. Thus, despite the fact that the Foucauldian story seems to throw ideology out, and with it, the very category of culture (as representation, subjectification, mediation and consensus), I believe that it actually proves that modernity needed culture as ideology as its alibi.<sup>29</sup> It is not only that power

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needed to hide itself in its own procedures, but that culture (as governmental discourse) needed to hide itself from itself. Thus, the displacement of culture as social management into culture as ideology produced the ideology of ideology (and the result is that the very critique of ideology and culture reproduces the very logic it seeks to escape).

In the end, then, both stories take us back to the same concept of culture. Of course, it is often pointed out that "culture" is one of the most complicated words in the English language.<sup>30</sup> This complexity is due in part to the intricate historical development of "culture." However, its complexity derives mainly from its use to mark a number of important concepts in several distinct discourses (only some of which are intellectual disciplines) and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought.<sup>31</sup> According to Raymond Williams, the category of culture emerged in the seventeenth century by a metaphorical extension of culture as cultivation – the tending of natural growth, a practice of domestication – to the broader domain of human activities and life.<sup>32</sup>

Even more importantly, the power of the concept of culture has depended for some time on its ambiguity. While it is not unusual for words to have multiple and even contradictory meanings, it is perhaps more unusual for that contradiction to be the source of a word's productivity and thus, to be sustained without challenge for centuries. It is the ambiguities within the concept, the complexity of those ambiguities, and their function in modernity that interest me here.

At least three ambiguities operate in the modern category of culture.<sup>33</sup> First, culture is both descriptive and normative. It involves a double articulation: on the one hand, the projection of a position, constituted by a temporal displacement from some other, from which change can be comprehended; and, on the other hand, the equation of that position with a standard of judgment on the basis of which one can offer a "total qualitative assessment" (Williams 1958, 295) of such changes. "The idea of culture is a general reaction to a general and major change in the conditions of our common life."<sup>34</sup> That is, the very act

of producing the concept of culture involves the construction of a place which allows one to both describe and judge the changes in everyday life; it requires and establishes, at the very least, a "court of human appeal," some locatable "higher" standard, to be set over the processes of practical social change. It is in this sense, for example, that Williams can talk about the fact that from the perspective of the dominant classes at Oxbridge, his Welsh mining community had "no culture" (Williams 1958, xvi).

The second ambiguity is the most obvious since culture has both an aesthetic and an anthropological reference. Anthropologically, culture refers to the whole way of life of a social group.<sup>35</sup> Aesthetically, culture refers to a privileged set of activities which are taken to have some intrinsic identity and value. What links these two referents is a notion of human development, self-realization, and perfection. Third, within each of these two domains – the anthropological and the aesthetic – culture has both fragmenting and totalizing functions. That is, a synecdochic (part/whole) logic operates within each of these domains. In the aesthetic realm, this logic expresses itself as the difficulty, if not impossibility, of distinguishing art from good art (or of defining bad art). While I think this is a general problem for modernist conceptions of art and aesthetic conceptions of culture (if, as in Arnold, culture is the best that has been thought and said, then obviously there can be no bad culture), its clearest statement can be found in Tolstoy's attempt to define art as morality. In the anthropological realm, this logic expresses itself in the rather paradoxical existence of cultural anthropology given that culture is the object of anthropological study. Presumably the explanation for the existence of this peculiar oxymoron (based on redundancy rather than contradiction) lies in the narrower definition of culture as symbolic systems which make sense of and bind together the elements of the whole way of life. For example, Turner offers the following two definitions of culture on the same page: culture is "a dynamic process which produces the behaviors, the practices, the institutions, and the meanings which constitute our social existence." And a little further: "culture comprises the processes of



making sense of our way of life."<sup>36</sup> Notice that the former definition (culture produces a way of life) already includes the latter (culture makes sense of a way of life).

Williams' attempt to reconcile if not overcome these ambiguities depended on his recognition that "the modern" is at least partly constituted by the act of separating culture and society. His project for a cultural studies which would refuse the separation – to study all the relations among all the elements in a whole way of life – failed because he could not avoid reinscribing the separation and privilege of culture.<sup>37</sup> The question is why the separation is apparently so difficult to overcome. And I think the answer becomes visible if we consider that Williams' attempt (and his failure) depended on inserting yet another meaning of culture into the equation, one that precisely mediates all the other ambiguities and allows the term to function as it does. That is, we can only understand the complexity of "culture" and explain how its ambiguities are manageable if we recognize the existence of yet another ambiguity, defined by yet another – "deeper" as it were – deployment of culture. Here "culture" is not invoked as an answer to questions about the specificity of historical periodization (defining "the modern") nor is it a description of human teleology and development. Rather, it is offered as an answer to the question of the specificity of the human. That is, it is the founding term for the project of a philosophical anthropology and in particular, it provides an answer grounded in the modern demand for human autonomy. Here culture becomes the mediating power of meaning (often through the universality of communicative practices): all expression and experience is defined as mediated and the category of meaning is absolutized.<sup>38</sup> Thus we can see more clearly how Williams compensated for his failure to actually escape the separation of culture and society, an escape that he imagined in the trope of the "structure of feeling." Through this trope he privileged certain forms of culture which most clearly and powerfully crystallized the structure of feeling (literature) and he equated culture with some sort of ethical standard of judgment

(enabled precisely by that very same structure of feeling). In so doing, he had to postulate a third term, that of culture as a process ("the community of process"), the most human of all processes, the process of communication which, it turns out, is the process of meaning production, which is the process of mediation and the space of ideology.

As the necessary process of mediation, culture is implicated in a logic of lack.<sup>39</sup> Culture is the medium of information, the supplement, which substitutes in human life for the fact of inadequate genetic coding, instinctual wiring, sensory relations, the real, or what have you.<sup>40</sup> Culture is the medium/agency by which the chaos of reality is transformed into an ordered – read "manageable" – sense of human reality. As such culture is not just descriptive but is embedded within a project for (future) action. As Musner puts it, "culture is not just there but has to be brought into life, by symbolic and/or political action."<sup>41</sup> Culture is the paradoxical realm through which, as Carey puts it, we first represent the world and then take up residence in our representations.<sup>42</sup> For Carey, this paradox suggests that culture is a form of psychosis, of schizophrenia. Without culture, reality would be unavailable except as James' "booming, buzzing confusion." Within culture, reality is always and already sensible. Culture is thus close to if not identified with the space of human consciousness, the middle space of experience, the uniquely human realm of existence. It is the space within which almost all "modernist" philosophy operates.<sup>43</sup>

In this sense, then, the modern category of culture is what comes to occupy the space of Kant's Copernican Revolution, with its distinction between noumenon and phenomenon. In less dualistic terms, culture is stitched onto the real as the space within which the subject comes into being, thereby constituting the ground for a philosophy of distance, alienation and negativity.<sup>44</sup> It is a discursive space in which only two processes are possible: differentiation and reconciliation, although it necessarily postulates some originary (or imagined) state of totality from which the necessary lack constitutive of humanity is derived. Of course, what is often lost in the

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transition from Kant's phenomena to culture is Kant's project: to rescue empiricism from Hume, and to rescue "man" (the subject as a self-grounding, self-legislating limit of reason) from empiricism.<sup>45</sup>

In its most powerful and acceptable contemporary forms, this notion of culture as mediation is captured and rearticulated by the discourses of social constructionism, or theories of the social construction of reality, which can be seen as the latest answer to the project of philosophical anthropology. While mediation cannot simply be equated with social construction, such theories are the most common form in which the modern regime of mediation is articulated in contemporary work. Obviously, this theoretical signifier covers a wide range of positions which are often conflated, often strategically, especially in recent "conservative" attacks on constructionism. I think it is important in the present climate to carefully distinguish different versions of social constructionism which disagree significantly about the ontology and effectivity of the real and the precise nature of the signifying mechanism of mediation. However I also think one can describe a certain set of common assumptions.<sup>46</sup> Social constructionism asserts that all experience of the world (and hence, any possible access or relation to reality) is always:

1. mediated (determined by what is "in between")
2. by "human" (social or subjective) structures
3. which are spatially and temporally specific
4. and which are expressive (semiotic or meaningful) in the broadest sense<sup>47</sup>
5. and which are signifying and subjectifying in the narrow sense, involving ideology (signification, representation), semantic referentiality, and/or cognitive, semiotic, or narrative notions of meaning.

Different versions of social constructionism will assent to and interpret these assumptions in various ways and combinations. The totality of these assumptions, the most common version of social constructionism in contemporary thought, not only makes culture the "essence" of human existence, it ends up equating culture with communication.<sup>48</sup> At the very minimum such theo-

ries bracket or erase the real (they do not necessarily deny it) and predefine every possibility of production (or articulation) as a particular kind of – a semantic – construction.<sup>49</sup> By identifying mediation with communication, all cultural practices are seen to involve the production of meanings and representations, of subjectivities and identities (making culture into little more than the form of ideology or the substance of common sense). This notion of culture as a plane of cognitive meanings makes every practice an instance of the communicational relationship between text and audience correlatively; and all critical analysis is thereby transformed into a question of individuated and psychological interpretations and tastes, although such individuation is often defined through social identities.

There is a specific and peculiar logic to the modernist concept of culture as mediation. This logic defines a dialectical space in which diverse aspects of the category of culture as mediation – the anthropological and the aesthetic, the normative and the descriptive, the fragmenting and the totalizing – are themselves mediated by the very notion of culture as mediation (now understood in terms of the communication/production of meaning). Culture as a dialectic reproduces the dialectical role of culture; mediation itself is always the mediating term. This enables "culture" to provide a reconciliation through its very becoming of the key contradictions of modernity (individual/social, reason/history, reason/nature, etc.). And it also means that there is no escaping the dialectic of culture. In this sense, logocentrism can be seen as the modern regime of culture, operating somewhat like a world-frame (Heidegger's *Gestell*).<sup>50</sup> Culture can thus serve as a regulatory ideal (whether as language, art, imagination, etc.) that unites communication and community by producing the form of the specificity of human existence (signification/subjectification) and the particularity of its actualization at any place-time. Further, as Bill Readings has argued, culture mediates between the *ethnos* (people), the nation and the state by bringing together development and meaning, a mediation that is absolutely necessary to the founding of modern Europe.<sup>51</sup>

Somewhat tangentially, the regime of culture constituted by the logic of mediation raises a set of historical questions, questions that might be framed as the attempt to provide a cultural study of (the victory of) Kantian (and post-Kantian) philosophy. I believe that the success of Kantian philosophy in fact can only be exhibited as an extraordinary victory. Of course, the story is not just about Kant, and certainly Kant is not the sacred origin of either this philosophy or the logic of mediation. Rather Kant is simply a clear point of articulation of discursive developments that were taking place across a wide range of discourses and domains, what Deleuze and Guattari call a conceptual persona.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, the question of the articulation of Kantian philosophy to modernity (in Germany and later France) has to be expanded to include (Kant's influence on and through) other writers such as Herder, Fichte, Schelling, Schiller and, of course, Hegel, in whom the articulation of philosophy and the nation-state was completed to be sure. Still there is a story to be told here. I know of no other example of such a rapid and apparently complete victory in the history of philosophy, not only in terms of its relation to intellectual and cultural elites, but also in relation to the state. Kant published the three Critiques (which I take to be the core of his philosophy) between 1781 and 1791. In 1793, Benjamin Sowden, writing in the *Monthly Review*, claimed that Kant's metaphysics was much "in vogue among the German Literati." By January of 1801, an Englishman, Henry Crabb Robinson could write from Germany to his brother in England that "a large Portion indeed the greatest Number of the University Professors and Scholars have become the Disciples of Kant. Of Kant I daresay you would be glad to know something." And in March of 1802 he wrote that "Kant and his disciples ... have taken possession of all the public posts in the literary world. It is now the reigning system, split indeed into factions, but united in the lead maxims of the great Founder."<sup>53</sup> In August of 1824, the ministry of education of Prussia apparently sent a letter to students warning them against "sham philosophy," by which it apparently meant non-Kantian/non-Hegelian philosophy.<sup>54</sup>

It cannot be coincidental that the moment of the first victory of Kantian philosophy is also the moment of the birth of European modernity, through the emergence and articulation of the figures of the state and capitalism. The question is why was Kant's philosophy so easily and quickly taken up by the emerging intellectual, cultural and political elites of this new formation of modernity? Bauman and others have provided one answer: that the power of "culture" was tied to the growing power of the European middle classes and to its emergent fraction of "professional" intellectuals who could now claim to control that most human and essential of all forms of value. While I think this provides some understanding of the relationship, the articulation, between Kantian philosophy and North Atlantic modernity, I do not think it is sufficient. On the other hand, while a number of scholars are beginning to find the traces, both implicit and explicit, of Kant's Eurocentrism, racism, etc., it is more difficult to define exactly how such politics are articulated within or dependent upon the philosophical revolution of the three Critiques.<sup>55</sup> I assume that somehow, part of the power and attraction of Kantian philosophy was that it could be and was so easily articulated to the project of the production of the modern. But the question remains: how and to what specific aspects of that project (i.e., the modern nation-state? capitalism? imperialism? individualization and normalization?) were specific tendencies of the Kantian discourse articulated?

There was also a second moment of Kant's victory which took place almost a century after the publication of the Critiques and which coincides, not unexpectedly, to the second moment of the realization of the project of North Atlantic modernity. I am referring to the period between 1870 and 1920, a moment which, at least in European philosophy, was captured to a large extent in Otto Liebman's call for a return to Kant. During this period, Neo-Kantianism in a variety of forms completely dominated German philosophy (at Marburg, Göttingen, Heidelberg, etc., with writers such as Cohen, Natorp, Nelson, Fries, Wundt, Brentano, Windelband, Rickert, Dilthey, etc.) and eventually Continental philosophy. Again, I

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assume that there is a relation – an articulated rather than a necessary one – between the return of Kant and the continued realization of the (now slightly revised) project of modernity.

My argument then is simple. The category of culture locates and establishes the centrality of the logic of mediation – in which mediation is understood in social, semantic and cognitive terms – in North Atlantic modernity. This logic partly defines the modern regime of culture as an organization of power. However, unlike some postmodernists who have argued that modernity has come to an end because commodification has destroyed the space of culture as mediation, I want to argue that modernity created the logic of mediation (or in other words, a regime which constrained the space of mediation by imposing a specific logic on it). And my sense of historical periodization is defined by the claim that the emerging formations of power may no longer find this logic useful or necessary. Thus I am not claiming to renounce the reality of mediation, only the logic which, among other things, reduces all mediation to meaning production, to the space of phenomena/phenomenology. I will return at the end of this paper to a more material notion of mediation and constructionism which, by operating “in the middle,” refuses to universalize the social as the site and agency of this reality-in-process (reality as self-production).

### III the popular and the story of modernity

There is another theme that makes up each of the stories of culture and the modern I have recounted above. The “othering” (differentiating) and negation of popular culture is a taken-for-granted part of both stories. As Revel puts it, “[t]he domain of the popular was now the negative world of illicit practices, odd, erratic conduct, unrestrained expressiveness and nature versus culture.”<sup>56</sup> And Stallybrass and White have argued persuasively that the complex and ambiguous negation of the popular was in fact a constitutive moment of the project of modernity enacted by the emerging bourgeoisie.<sup>57</sup> The question is: why? Why was it so important to “other”

and then discipline popular culture? And why is it so unimportant today, except in very specific sites and in very specific ways.

I want to suggest that neither story can answer this question because neither has an adequate theory of “the popular,” and this is evidenced by their immediate subsumption of “the popular” into the category of culture. Once again, I can begin with the story that modernity tells itself about the popular, a story that, like the two I have told above, is not wrong so much as it is recursive. According to this story, the concept of the popular has always been implicated in economies of differentiation and exclusion. The concept of the popular emerged, as early as the 16th century, as a sociological term which already embodied a double ambiguity and exclusion. On the one hand, it embodied the distinction between the people as a whole and the common people, and, on the other hand, it embodied a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate struggles (and between the people associated with each). In a sense, this double exclusion was repeated in the 19th century when the term was articulated to culture. Popular culture referred to that which was accessible both to those excluded from any social representation – children, women, slaves, and the colonized – and to the subordinated masses, the lower classes (who while subordinated were at least included under the sign of the *socius*). Consequently, the term is, according to this story, always and already implicated in systems of distinctions; it functioned as a tool to discriminate between cultures. Of course, the fact of difference allowed for the reversal of that valuation, and opened up the possibility of another, more romantic, discourse of the people as the folk, and of popular culture as authentic. However, this reversal of the particular system of differentiation and evaluation was itself quickly reinscribed into a more elaborate economy which reasserted the negativity of the masses and of mass culture as against the popular.

But this story, however accurate it may be, fails to question the positivity of the popular, to ask why its otherness had to be rearticulated into difference. Even Stallybrass and White's description of the carnivalesque practices of the popular

makes any description of the popular dependent on an already constituted negative relation to some other culture (in both the anthropological and aesthetic senses) and on the subordinate position of the people. The result is that the positivity of the people, its unity and lack of differentiation, is taken to be the sign of some intrinsic negativity: the popular is that which does not allow for discrimination, and which refuses to make distinctions of value.

But as Lotte and others have described it, the popular is more than its difference: it is a "system of survival."<sup>58</sup> There is, of course, no guarantee that such a system operates through the mediating structures of signification or the legitimated articulations of such mediations into a notion of modern reason. On the contrary, even the most superficial examination of the practices of popular discourses suggests that passion rather than meaning is at play. By negating popular culture as a system of survival in the name of culture as signifying mediation, the modern concept of culture reproduced its own logic of mediation since the interpretation of culture itself required a mediator who was himself (I use the masculine here intentionally) an expert. But the political power of this particular instantiation of the logic of mediation (i.e., culture) goes well beyond its discursive potential for the professionalization of cultural elites, extending to its endless production of distances or differences, and its constitution of a comprehensive logic of negativity.

The stories of culture and modernity assume that the people as such were (and are) incapable of understanding themselves or their "culture" (the popular). After all, if the project of modernity was the management of the social through the construction of a civil sphere of discursive reason (ideology as signification), the discursive and nondiscursive practices of the popular posed a number of serious challenges: how could the popular be constructed as culture? how could the mediations of signification, offering themselves up as the precepts of "reason," possibly influence the conduct of people guided only by passion? Certainly not by virtue of their claim to meaning or truth. To whatever extent such popular struggles could be imagined, what was relevant was

only the fact that they were effective and affective. That is, the real struggle involved the attempt to negate the power of such popular discourses to speak with authority and the right of the individuals living within their spaces to occupy sites of potential authority, to become the subjects of social action. On the other hand, if we understand modernity to be an attempt at social management through disciplines of self-formation and strategies of governmentality, then the struggle is also clear: the popular constructed realities (behaviors, relations, and states of feeling) which were no longer acceptable within modernity. None of this implies that the popular in some way embodies nature in opposition to modernity as the embodiment of culture. Rather, I want to approach the popular with a theory "whose geometries, paradigms, and logics break out of binaries, dialectics and nature/culture models of any kind."<sup>59</sup> And I want to suggest that the popular has been doing this all along.

With this, I want to turn to rock and roll<sup>60</sup> — actually to what might more accurately be called the rock formation. I say "rock formation" because, while it is crucial that it is music that serves to hold all of the pieces together (and so it is determining in some way in the first instance<sup>61</sup>), the effectivity of rock as popular practice is not, in the last instance, merely a matter of musical characteristics or even audience responses. What is at stake is a set of relations — textual, affective, libidinal, social and otherwise — that produce the various articulations of the rock formation as a system of survival. Seeing rock in these terms, I think we can find the answer to the question of why modernity needed to negate the popular and why that negation had to be enacted so entirely on its surface (where it operates): to put it simply and boldly, the popular is full of spaces of non-Kantianism and such spaces operate on the surface for all to enter; it operates with a kind of economy of place-making where the logic of mediation does not and cannot operate, despite the best efforts of academics to domesticate it and to place it back into the logic of mediation (i.e., to make it exist as culture). In the face of such efforts, it is striking how little the "experts of culture" understand about popular

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practices like the rock formation, which is to say the discourses and discursive relations in which music is so imbricated, and how effectively its fans (and the producers of Muzak?) can use it. But of course, the fact that the positivity of the popular operates on the surface does not guarantee either that anyone can or will see it or that, having seen it, its significance (not its signification) will be any more transparent than that of any other formation, or that having grasped its significance, anyone will be capable of entering into its power.

I use rock here not because I want to privilege it (as some more authentic form of the popular) but because I think that it does offer us fairly direct transportation into the space of the popular and consequently, the space of an alternative modernity. It can do this precisely because of how it functions as a discursive formation or perhaps more accurately, an assemblage of enunciation (which includes the nondiscursive). First, it is grounded in a sonorial (rather than a visual economy). Musical practices are not the only form of expression involved – there are visual, bodily, linguistic, etc. expressions at work in rock, but I would argue that this heterogeneity (and each of the forms within it) is made to function according to the laws of rock's sonorial economy. It is worth pointing out that the logic of mediation is closely articulated to an epistemology grounded in the epistemological privileging of vision. Second, it is so deeply integrated into the fabric and texture of everyday life as to be virtually inseparable. The various musical and nonmusical practices of the discursive formation of rock are like pieces of a rhizome, an overgrown hedge, a clump of crab grass: they cannot be extricated and studied in and of themselves (which is not to say that they are not effective and that that effectivity cannot be approached). Third, rock is a spatial practice that is about the reorganization of space itself. As a result, the popular memories which rock often evokes are more about the spaces and places where people have lived their lives than about history, which in many cases has worked against them anyway.<sup>62</sup>

Fourth, rock's power results from the fact that it operates primarily on an affective plane. Again,

I am not denying that it sometimes produces meanings and representations (and even works ideologically); I am claiming that such effects are there to take us somewhere else, and if they do not, the results are usually boring and ineffective. Consequently (and fifth), the various articulations of the rock formation function as machinery for living and surviving; they offer procedures and produce states which are about finding ways to navigate one's way through everyday life. Rock (not coincidentally, I might add, like cultural studies) is not about grand modern narratives *per se*; it is not about the destruction of community. Rather it is about the organization of "the various time/spaces in which the labor, as well as the pleasure, of everyday living is carried out."<sup>63</sup> It explores the consequences and possibilities of new forms of mobility; it is all about modalities of affiliation and belonging, models of community not based on time or identity, and strategies of place-making and agency. Rock, as exemplar of the popular, is all about returning the motion to human life. And at the same time, of course, rock – like so much of the popular – has rarely been able to escape everyday life to articulate such productions to larger political and economic structures of subordination and subjugation.

Before moving on, let me reassert that I am not claiming that the rock formation (or the popular more generally) is outside the regimes of the modern or that it is premodern but rather, that it opens up virtual (in a Deleuzian sense) spaces of counter- or non-Kantian modernity. Similarly, I am not claiming some kind of authenticity or immediacy for the sonorial, although I do believe that the fact of rock's sonoriality makes the inadequacy of the logics of modernism all the more obvious. And finally, I do not intend to deny that sometimes the popular is about ideology, but even here, I do not think that this "aboutness" can be understood through the post-Kantian logics of mediation.

## IV alternative modernities and the space of culture

I am suggesting that the popular offers us a glimpse of a countermodern theory of culture, by

putting before us a discursive space that cannot be totally assimilated into the logic of mediation. Insofar as that logic is increasingly identified with the notion of textuality (and we can take notice of what Dwight Conquergood has called the "almost total domination of textualism in the academy"<sup>64</sup>), we can see a number of critics attempting to find ways out of the closed space of culture, to open up the possibility of "post-aesthetic" (Bennett, Hunter) and "post-anthropological" (Gilroy) theories of culture as discourse. Paul Gilroy has described "the idea and ideology of the text and textuality as a mode of communication which provides a model for all other forms of ... exchange and ... interaction" as "eurocentric."<sup>65</sup> Edward Said has argued that "it is a fallacy to assume that the swarming, unpredictable and problematic mess in which human beings live can be understood on the basis of what hooks – texts – say."<sup>66</sup> And even more radically, Renato Rosaldo has suggestively written that:

My effort to show the force of a simple statement taken literally goes against anthropology's classic norms, which prefer to explicate culture through the gradual thickening of symbolic webs of meaning... [I question] the common anthropological assumption that the greatest human import resides in the densest forest of symbols. Do people always in fact describe most thickly what matters most to them?<sup>67</sup>

Yet these authors have not succeeded in articulating what a theory of culture located within an alternative modernity would look like, although each has made important contributions to the project. What would it mean to understand culture without a logic of mediation, to see culture itself operating outside of the paranoid and despotic space of the modern logic of mediation? First, one would have to stop assuming the existence of a separate realm or plane of culture which exists independently of another plane (e.g., the real). Rather, culture and reality have to be assumed to exist on the same plane, in the same space as it were. Second, one would have to stop universalizing and privileging culture as if, in its generality, it defined either humanity or modernity. Third,

one would have to stop identifying culture with the space of the between and vice versa. That is, one would have to stop reducing the between to the signifying (as the apparent dialectical relationship between meaning and subjectification). Fourth, one would have to stop radically separating understanding, feeling and will (as did Kant).<sup>68</sup> And finally, one would have to give up the continued transcendental humanism of modernity, embodied both in the privileged status of the question of the specificity of the human (and its discontinuity with the other), and in the reduction of ontology (the construction of reality) to anthropology/epistemology (to the social construction of reality).

Of course, it would be ironic if an alternative modernity could only be defined by its difference from North Atlantic (and Kantian) modernity, reinscribing itself within a logic of negativity; and so it is necessary to begin to ask, in more positive terms, what such a countermodern theory of culture might look like. Let me begin then by offering a somewhat commonsensical description (which is, of course, precisely not commonsensical) of such a theory. It would begin with a more contextual notion of discursive practices and effects, locating both texts and audiences within broader contexts that articulate the identity and effects of any practice. Without denying that cultural practices enable us to "make sense" of the world (or at least to navigate within a sensible world), such a contextualism would contest the reduction of sense-making to cognitive meaning and interpretation, and the model of culture as somehow standing apart from – and between – other planes which it interprets. Instead it would assume that cultural practices always operate on multiple planes, producing multiple effects that cannot be entirely analyzed in the terms of any theory of communication, ideology, consciousness or semiotic. But if culture is not simply a matter of meaning and communication, then the struggle over "culture" is not merely a struggle over interpretive or cognitive maps available to the different and differently subordinated fractions (which in the contemporary world include the vast majority of the population). Instead, the analysis of culture would involve the broader

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exploration of the way in which discursive practices construct and participate in the machinery by which the ways people live their lives (behaviors and relations, including modalities of affiliation and belonging, agency and mobility) are themselves produced and controlled. Rather than looking for the "said" or trying to derive the saying from the said, rather than asking what texts mean or what people do with texts, cultural studies would be concerned with what discursive practices do in the world.

However, I do believe that in order to theorize such a countermodern discourse in more explicit terms, it is necessary to provide the philosophical grounds on which such a theory can be constructed because I believe that a theory of culture is bound up with deeper philosophical issues of ontology and epistemology. I want, therefore, to offer a very (too) brief exposition of what such a philosophical grounding might look like, drawing largely on the Spinozism of Deleuze and Guattari.<sup>69</sup> Why Spinoza?

Returning for a moment to my earlier tangent into a proposed cultural study of the discursive victory of Kantianism, there is another question that could be asked and another story that should be told, for in any war, if someone is victorious, someone else gets defeated. So, in the victory of a (Kantian) logic of mediation, who gets erased as it were, if not from history then from the possibility of playing a central and active role in the future? Here the answer is, among others, Leibniz, Wolff and most importantly, Spinoza – not the Spinoza of Leo Strauss, but the Spinoza who was the last of a line of Levantine philosophers, the Spinoza for whom Toledo was the capital of an alternative modern Europe.<sup>70</sup> Toledo here represents a countergeography and counterhistory of modern Europe, one not built on difference and exclusion but on exchange and multiplicity. It is not surprising that this geohistory is in fact erased (and the tradition reconstructed as the Moorish invasion) in the construction of modern Europe. In very simple terms, one can begin to describe Spinoza's countermodern philosophy in the following terms:

I. Being or substance (the One) is primordially spatial (at least in the sense that time and space

are not distinguishable); and the space of effectivity is fundamentally sonorial.

2. Both nature and thought are attributes or expressions of the One which is constantly constructing itself in its expressions.

3. Geometry provides the form in which one can describe the diagrammatic (Foucault) power of this expressivity.

4. The result is a philosophy of intimacy rather than of distance.

It is this Spinoza, a Spinoza who is inscribed in the discourses of Nietzsche, Bergson and others, who also animates the discourses of Deleuze and Guattari. However, I want to offer a number of caveats here. First, I do not mean to suggest that Deleuze and Guattari are, in purely philosophical terms, correct; after all, that is not the project of this prolegomenon (which is, to remind the reader, to articulate one possibility for a cultural studies capable of responding to the contemporary context). I offer their way only as an exemplar of one possible direction for such theoretical work.<sup>71</sup>

Second, the fact that one can begin to imagine ways of talking about culture (as discourse) outside of the logic of mediation, that one can even find cultural practices that operate outside this logic, does not mean that somehow, the real effects of this logic will thereby simply disappear and the modernity of our lives and our souls will be somehow magically transformed. Precisely because I do not believe in culture as mediation (at least in the modernist sense), I do not believe that culture transforms reality in that way. But I do believe that it is possible to transform reality and that cultural practices, along with other forms of practice, can be important in such efforts. In fact, I believe that cultural practices have to be understood as active agents in the material world of everyday life, social structure and power.

Third, while I want to develop a theory that locates culture outside the logic of mediation and even argues that cultural practices are often asignifying, I am not proposing a new theory of "immediacy." On the contrary, I want to propose a different theory of mediation and of the effectivity of culture, or more accurately, I want to get



out of the contradiction between the immediate and the mediate which the logic of mediation (articulated by the related logic of negativity) constructs. I want to deny mediation in the sense of a filter or screen, always put in place by and constructed as processes of signification, representation and subjectification. And in its place, or rather, in its space, I want to propose that we understand mediation to describe the (not necessarily anthropocentric) trajectory of effectivity or becoming. That is, the path of causality (understood broadly and including causality at a distance) is always mediated: i.e., it is interrupted, intersected, magnified or diminished, transformed, bent, blocked, inflected, redirected, etc., by other practices and events. Mediation in this sense describes a nonlinear causality; it maps the flows, interruptions and breaks which, according to Deleuze and Guattari, describe the becoming or self-production of reality. Insofar as authors like Deleuze and Guattari, and Foucault can be seen as trying to rescue empiricism from Kant, such a philosophy is a new empiricism, even a new positivism, which attempts to radically reconfigure the relation between the necessity of epistemology and the possibility of ontology.

I want then to think of discourse as literally shuttling or mobilizing events or individualities in space and time. For example, Deleuze and Guattari's ontology of culture begins by conceiving of reality as a multiplicity of events which can be defined only in terms of their effectivities, their possible and actual effects and the ways they are or can be affected.<sup>72</sup> Any event is then understandable only as its possible trajectories, its existence on the way to somewhere else. An event is the virtual paths that effects might follow to wherever they are actualized (to where they make a difference). That is, reality is comprised of "becomings" and thus, reality itself is always becoming. Reality is constantly producing or constructing itself. Constructionism – but not social constructionism – is the first principle of this philosophical articulation of an alternative modernity. But if reality is always becoming something else, then reality is always in the between, but this is not the between of the logic of mediation. Let me quote here at length from Meaghan Morris:

The term "becoming," often taken by hasty critics to mean the silly idea that you can do whatever you want, designates a concept with a quite precise structure, and a process with specific limitations. First, becoming must always involve at least two terms, not one in isolation, swept up in a process that transforms them both; if a man is becoming-insect, the insect is also changing. Second, double becoming involves an "aparallel evolution," not a specular or dualist structure, connecting heterogeneous terms; when a man is becoming-insect, the insect is not becoming "man," but something else ... third, a man does not become a "real" insect, but becoming is not a fiction that he does; becoming is "real," but what is real is the becoming – the process, or the medium, in-between terms.<sup>73</sup>

Reality is becoming and it is the becoming that is real. Like the logic of mediation, Deleuze and Guattari operate in the middle, but it is reality itself and not the human (or culture) which is in the middle. Consequently, any description of reality is a description of the formations (in the sense of both the machinery and its products) of affect. Affect here is intentionally ambiguous for it refers both to effectivity (the ability to effect and be effected – as in Nietzsche), and to a specific plane of effectivity (as in Freud, where affect is the plane of cathexis, and includes more than just libidinal modes).<sup>74</sup> What is the relationship between these two understandings of affect?<sup>75</sup> I would argue that what links them is the fact that both are grounded in notions of quantitative intensities of energy. It is as lines of intensity that events exist (as becomings); but intensities are organized in complex ways and along multiple dimensions: as planes of effectivity (e.g., moods, "mattering maps," emotions, desire, the multiplicity of pleasures); as organizations operating across a plane (producing particular formations of moods, etc.); as stratifications or articulations (distributing reality as content and expression); and as assemblages that traverse both planes and stratifications and that effect their very organization.

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For Deleuze and Guattari, one must not only describe the different organizations of reality but more importantly, the mechanisms that produce them, for it is these mechanisms that define the different possibilities of the actualization of an organization's (and any event within it) virtual effects.<sup>76</sup> In this way, human reality can be seen to be continuous and contiguous with nonhuman reality. In fact, signification and ideology may themselves be seen as affective states, organizations of intensity which have particular effects, producing subjectivity, consciousness, intentionality, etc. Thus I understand the question of culture to involve in part a struggle to control the virtual effects that particular discourses may produce under determinate conditions. In other words, it is a question of the mechanisms controlling the effects of particular practices by articulating them into specific affective organizations, defining the virtual quality of their effects.

But I have yet to approach the specific question of culture; again, not surprisingly, Deleuze and Guattari locate culture – or perhaps now we should start talking about discourse – in the real and refuse to separate the productivity of discourse (as a human practice) from that of reality itself or from a more general theory of expression. Reality is itself expressive, but expression no longer assumes the existence of subjects or subjectivity. It is neither distinctly human nor mediating (at least in the modern sense). The world itself does not exist outside of its expressions.<sup>77</sup> At the same time, expression cannot be reduced to some purely biological or material project which erases its productivity, for it is in expressing itself that reality produces itself. A similar notion can be found in the work of the Swiss ethnologist Adolf Portmann, who argued that the diversity of nature can only be understood as an act of “nature expressing itself” and in that very act, producing itself precisely in and as its diversity.

Expression is the process by which reality “stratifies” itself by an act of articulation or distribution through which events are made to exist (in a non-necessary relation) as either content or expression,<sup>78</sup> where expression becomes the articulation and content the articulatable. This is not

simply a reinscription of the distinction between the active and the passive, but rather a production of a relation between a particular possibility of experiencing or existing (such as visibility, to use a metaphor of only one sense) and that which is experienced (or becomes visible). Thus, the categories of content and expression are operable at every level of existence (from the physical to the organic to the human). And consequently, discourse and reality, expression and content, always operate on the same plane:

The independence of the form of expression and the form of content is not the basis for a parallelism between them or a representation of one by the other, but on the contrary a parceling of the two, a manner in which expressions are inserted into contents, in which we ceaselessly jump from one register to another, in which signs are at work in things themselves just as things extend into or are deployed through signs. An assemblage of enunciation does not speak “of” things; it speaks *on the same level* as states of things and states of content. So that the same  $x$ , the same particle, may function either as a body that acts and undergoes actions or as a sign constituting an act or order-word, depending on which form it is taken up by.<sup>79</sup>

What is distinctive about expression at the level of the human is that expression – now we can call it discourse or perhaps even culture – is organized as assemblages of enunciation<sup>80</sup> which produce “incorporeal transformations.” An assemblage of enunciation (or a semiotic) is always a mixture of various “regimes of signs” and only functions as such. A regime of signs is a “function of existence” of language; such regimes are always capable of being transformed into one another. They are discursive logics or productive mechanisms organizing expression. As such, any regime might be characterized as operating (1) on a particular plane (e.g., interpretive vs. passional), (2) along a particular vector or architectonic principle (circularity vs. the point from which issues a line of flight), and (3) according to a specific economy or abstract machine (faciality vs. the black hole).<sup>81</sup>

According to Deleuze and Guattari, there are many such regimes, although clearly the two most important ones – the signifying regime and the postsignifying regime – are those which, taken together, not coincidentally constitute the modern space of culture: the “principle strata binding human beings are the organism, significance and interpretation, and subjectification and subjection” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 134).

As I have said, the signifying regime (or signification) “is only one regime of signs among others, and not the most important one” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 111). It is an imperial or paranoid despotic regime, a “tragic regime of infinite debt to which one is simultaneously debtor and creditor” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 113). And it describes “all subjected, arborescent, hierarchical, centred groups” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 116). It operates on, even constructs, the plane of interpretation and communication – “lack or excess, it hardly matters” – which “serve[s] to reproduce and produce signifier” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 115, 114). Its architectonic vector is infinitely circular: every sign refers to another *ad infinitum*, so that denotation is always deferred into, assumed to be part of, connotation. It expands without limit, so there is a multiplicity of circles of signifying chains (and signs can jump from one circle to another). And its economy is always built upon the projection of a supreme signifier (what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as faciality) which necessarily produces and excludes an other as something negatively valued (the scapegoat).

The second regime of signs to which Deleuze and Guattari attribute particular importance is the postsignifying (passional) subjective regime which is “defined by a relation with the outside that is expressed more as an emotion than an idea, and more as an effort or action than imagination.” Postsignifying regimes always involve two axes of passion: an axis of subjection (e.g., consciousness) and an axis of subjectification (e.g., love). Together they define a point where the subject of enunciation and the subject of the statement (as constituted within the particular assemblage) intersect. This point of intersection is obsessional; like a “black hole” it absorbs everything but at the same time, it enables that

which has already been “othered” to escape its negativity and to become a positive line of flight. In its modern articulation, the doubling of the subject effects a kind of normalization which produces a “new form of slavery” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 130), a subject who is enslaved to himself as legislator, that is, as reason or the *cogito*. Yet, at the same time, in an-other articulation, this regime may be absolutely central to the formation of the popular, as Charles Stivale’s pioneering work on Cajun music demonstrates.<sup>82</sup>

Obviously, the details of these descriptions are at best difficult, but the point I want to take from them is that the two major structures that define the modern logic of mediation (signification and subjectification) are, in this theory, the effects of two distinct discursive formations. Moreover, they are not the only such formations. There are other regimes of signs. For example, the primitive presignifying regime is characterized as a pluralism or polyvocality of forms of expression. Within its multidimensional space, “forms of corporeality, gestuality, rhythm, dance, and rite coexist heterogeneously with the vocal form” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 117). Countersignifying regimes are always a matter of numbers, involving a mobile and plural distribution. Again, the point is not the specific descriptions of these regimes, but a theory which begins to allow us to see the multiplicity of discourses, and the multiplicity of ways in which they work; a theory which makes discourse an active player in the ongoing construction of reality without reducing its possibilities or the possibilities of reality.<sup>83</sup>

Looking at these four regimes, we might hypothesize that the rock formation, as an exemplar of the popular, is a mixed formation with elements of the postsignifying (it is after all passional and even obsessional; it does produce positive lines of flight but not the doubled subject), presignifying (it is after all heterogeneous) and countersignifying (it is after all distributive). But it may also include elements of other regimes which have yet to be described. Yet nothing here would lead one to assume that the popular involves interpretation and signification, or that the popular exists in a between which is someplace other than that of the real.

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Thus, somewhat ironically, if we are trying to get a handle on the politics of the contemporary social formation, and on the possibilities of a rigorous and useful cultural studies within it, if we are trying to intervene as intellectuals into the possibilities of the contemporary transformations of modernity, we will have to leave culture, at least in its modern articulations, behind. The more I look at the contemporary world, the more I am reminded of that haunting refrain that Red Buttons used to intone on television every week when I was a child: strange things are happening. But of course, such statements are always true, at every time and place (something too many postmodernists ignore). The challenge for cultural studies is to weave a narrow path between the modern regime mourning its own disappearance and the various postmodernist embracings of the destructiveness of relativism. The only way to accomplish this is to refrain from either metaphorizing or ontologizing the strange, and instead, in Deleuze and Guattari's terms, to return to the refrain itself. Similarly, rather than gleefully welcoming the strange or angstfully rejecting it, we still have to find some way of holding on to some real hope for a better future by continuing to struggle to gain a better understanding of the particularities of the strange.



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### notes

1 For some background to this argument, see Lawrence Grossberg, *Bringing It All Back Home: Essays on Cultural Studies* (1997).

2 See Lawrence Grossberg, *We Gotto Get Out Of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (1992).

3 "Difference assumes that the consolidation of the self entails the assimilation/exclusion of the object/Other by the subject." It assumes "that individual and collective identity is always and necessarily founded on a same/other dialectic and produced by a logic of exclusion or sacrifice." Allison Weir, *Sacrificial Logics: Feminist Theory and*

*the Critique of Identity* (1996) 6. In my terms, such theories are located within the logic of negativity.

I want to make my position here very clear, especially in the light of recent attacks on the politics of identity and the theories of difference, often authored by angry white men in the academy (e.g., Gidlin 1995). I do not think that political and theoretical work on identity is responsible for the contemporary success of a new conservatism nor for the failures, whatever they may be, of the contemporary progressive movement.

4 Paul du Gay, "Organising Identity: Entrepreneurial Governance and Public Management," *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (1996).

5 John Frow and Meaghan Morris, introduction, *Australian Cultural Studies*, by Frow and Morris (1993). See also James Donald, "The Citizen and the Man About Town" in Hall and du Gay.

6 Slavoj Žižek, "The Subject Supposed to ... [Know, Believe, Enjoy, Desire]" (1987).

7 Stuart Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left* (1988). See also Grossberg 1992.

8 Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (1996) 103.

9 Whatever the problems with the concept of "cultural capital," it is still the most useful concept we have here.

10 Helen Grace, conversation, 1995.

11 Meaghan Morris, "Too Soon, Too Late: Reading Claire Johnston, 1970-1981," *Dissonances*, ed. Catriona Moore (1994) 128.

12 Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993).

13 I want to thank Lutz Musner for this statement.

14 Lutz Musner has suggested to me (Internet, April 7, 1997) that the basic phenomenon of modernity might be that its "culture" does not provide a metalanguage to signify a way out.

15 See Lawrence Grossberg, "The Space of Culture, the Power of Space," *The Postcolonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*, ed. Iain

Chambers and Lidid Curti (1996); Lawrence Grossberg, "Cultural Studies, Modern Logics and Theories of Globalization," *Back to Reality? Social Experience and Cultural Studies*, ed. Angela McRobbie (1997). The logic of temporality obviously has a lot to do with contemporary theories of language on the one hand, and of consciousness and the subject on the other. I have argued that unlike language (including speech) and vision, music is primarily spatial and it is about spatiality, despite the best efforts of modernist intellectuals and critics to temporalize it. See Lawrence Grossberg, *Dancing In Spite Of Myself: Essays on Popular Culture* (1997). Dipesh Cakrabarty in "Provincializing Europe," *Cultural Studies* 6.3 (1992) apparently argues that historicization – the writing of history as it were – performs the splitting of the colonial subject into citizen (despite the lack of citizenship) and the interiorized private self incessantly revealing itself. It is this split which is at the heart of the bourgeois individual.

16 See Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community* (1993).

17 A countermodern theory might rearticulate each of these dimensions: interiority/exteriority into the problematic of singularity; identity and difference into the problematic of otherness; and essentialism/antiessentialism into the problematic of articulation. These three are not equivalent but they are part of the same logic of negativity. A logic of positivity would involve a movement onto a different plane, from a matter of identities to practices, individuation and belongings. For a critique of interiority, see Agamben (against interiority as a logic) and Rose (against interiority as a psychology). See Nikolas Rose, "Identity, Genealogy, History" in Hall and du Gay.

I want to argue that interiority is real in the modern world, but that it is also a non-necessary product of the organization of reality in that world. Consider Foucault's argument in *The Order of Things* on the epistemological doublet. Here interiority becomes an alibi for differences, based on a homology between life, labor and language. To put it in other words, because the subject itself is doubled, it is different, and this grounds difference in other realms. In his reading of Descartes,

Foucault argues that the *cogito* as an interiority expels difference from inside. But poststructuralism "interiorizes" differences as voice (as opposed to rhizomatics as multiplicity where, to put it simply, there is no voice).

18 It is important to recognize the ambiguity of singularity: on the one hand, it refers to specificity and overdetermination, and on the other, to the positivity and facticity of an event, or what Agamben refers to as "being such as it is." The latter points to an ontological principle of heterogeneity (is-ness as a category of nonrelational difference – this-ness and that-ness); the former to an epistemological principle of specification via causality.

While theories of negativity attempt to derive agency from subjectivity (e.g., as the result of the contradiction between interpellations), agency always involves more – the possibility (affectivity) of choice.

19 Obviously, the logic of mediation is closely related to the dominance of the trope of visibility in epistemological discourse and the eventual displacement of ontology in the name of epistemology.

20 Following Amin's interpretation of Eurocentrism, we can begin to see how the logic of identity and difference is necessary to the construction of the identity of modern Europe. For Amin, it was not only necessary for "modern Europe" to distinguish itself from tradition as the nonmodern (that could be understood within a logic of positivity as well), it was also necessary for it to differentiate itself as the necessary and only possible origin of modernity. In this sense, the nonmodern "rest" of the world is constituted negatively, marked as constitutively different, incapable of ever founding modernity (although presumably capable of receiving it as the subjects of imperialism). I think it is reasonable to ask: if the search for identity is what North Atlantic modernity is at least in part about, then, looking at where it has gotten us (all of us, together), is it reasonable to assume that subordinated populations can not only improve their lot but also change the structure of social relations by following the same path? One might argue that antiessentialist theories of

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identity do not constitute the same path, but that is just what I want to contest. See Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism* (1989).

21 Marilyn Strathern, "Enabling Identity? Biology, Choice and the New Reproductive Technologies" in Hall and du Gay 41.

22 Obviously, one needs to recognize the complexity of the relationship among these political and cultural ideals, and between them and capitalism as mediated through the nation-state. Also, obviously, these ideals (and hence, in one sense, culture) were limited to Europe and were not thought applicable to those places which were brought into the economic and political control of modern Europe through forms of colonialism and imperialism. This helps to explain part of the ambiguity of culture.

23 Tony Bennett, "The Foucault Effect," forthcoming. Readings (1996) argues, still operating within this story, that in modern society, culture mediates between the ethnic nation and the rational state to produce a distinct national identity. According to Readings, the post-Fordist collapse of the nation-state means that the project of culture collapses as well.

24 See Lawrence Grossberg, "The Cultural Studies Crossroads Blues," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 1 (1998).

25 Bennett.

26 Despite the fact that Foucault refers to this as governmentality, it can be evident in the practices of private organizations as much as in those of the state.

27 Zygmunt Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters* (1987).

28 In this sense, then, the disappearance of cultural capital described above might be articulated to the collapse or disappearance of the middle class in contemporary capitalism, as described by Mike Davis and others.

29 There are some serious problems with this second story. While it may be correct to argue that in modernity, culture is deployed as a field of

social management, in a certain sense, this leaves unanswered the question of what culture is or how one can recognize cultural as opposed to other forms of social practice. Moreover, this story seems to assume that culture, or at least its deployment as a technology, did not exist before modernity. It also does not address the specificity of micropolitics in the modern or the question of the continuing importance of a politics of ideology (representation, consensus) throughout modernity. Thus, some writers treat discipline and governmentality as equivalent to Foucault's category of micropolitics, suggesting that there were no micropolitics before modernity. I believe that this is a misreading and that micropolitics are always present in society. But in modernity, the particular form of micropolitics is articulated to a specific state project – governmentality – and a particular form of power – disciplinarity as self-formation.

30 I think this is true of other modern European languages as well but the argument would take us far afield, especially since the notion of culture cannot be separated from a series of other terms (e.g., civilization, *Bildung*) and because the field of terms varies significantly in different languages. One would have to trace the changing pattern of relations among the various terms in each language/society, including English.

31 Of course, one can question the assumption of reading from the semantics of a term to a theory of a concept.

32 Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (1958).

33 An obvious fourth one is the fact that culture is both a process and a product, but I find this less interesting in the context of the present argument.

34 Williams 1958, 295.

35 This notion goes back at least as far as Herder who, interestingly, also pluralized the notion of culture(s) in the 18th century.

36 Graeme Turner, *Film as Social Practice*, 2nd ed. (1993) 44.

37 See Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (1965).

38 It is surprising how little this other meaning of culture is discussed; for example, it is entirely missing from such major texts as Herbert's *Culture and Anomie*, and Fabian's *Time and the Other*.

39 Insofar as Freud understood the fetish to be a compensation for a threatened or perceived lack, we might say that culture has become a fetish object, which may be why it is so hard to attack.

40 Lutz Musner has pointed out to me that this lack which calls the modern concept of culture into existence can also be understood politically, as shortcomings of certain groups of people in achieving goals which are considered important and desirable.

41 Lutz Musner, personal e-mail.

42 James W. Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (1989).

43 Including phenomenological, hermeneutical, structuralist, poststructuralist, pragmatic and even most positivist theories.

44 Is this what enables Kant and later Kantians to champion capitalism and/or the state as a necessary mediating and ordering force?

45 Thus it is not surprising that it is only in the Third Critique that Kant returns to empiricism, but by then it is almost a mystical empiricism (of the sublime, the imagination). When I gave a version of this paper in Vienna, I realized that it was Wittgenstein's continued commitment to the Kantian project which put him in conflict with the Vienna Circle. Also, the transition in Freud from the early hydraulic model to the later interpretive theories of the unconscious can be understood as a move into Kantianism.

46 We must also distinguish various countertheories by how they assent to and dissent from the set of assumptions listed in the text.

47 Both Marx and Latour might be suggested as social constructionists who are not committed to a principle of semiotic mediation; instead, the mediation is accomplished through a process of labor, although both assume that labor itself is in some way already signifying. Latour's network theory

seems to escape the logic of mediation by rejecting the second and fifth assumptions in my description of social constructionism. For that reason, his work provides an important model and should be taken more seriously by cultural studies. However, I do not think it offers an adequate countermodern theory of culture, nor do I think his work adequately challenges the other constitutive logics of modernity. On the other hand, there are significant similarities between Latour and the work of Deleuze and Guattari, to whom I will appeal later. But the differences are equally significant: not only does Latour have no concept of power or culture (the specificity of the discursive), he has no theory to account for the specificity of what Deleuze and Guattari would call machinic assemblages or what Foucault would call apparatuses. For Latour, they are all understandable as networks.

48 Note that none of this denies the existence of the world – that would be a version of subjective idealism – nor does it deny the continuing function of that reality as a regulative principle or a transcendental term.

49 Of course, if social constructionism is modernist, so are the mind/body and representation/reality dualisms.

50 See Heidegger's "Essay on Technology." Another image for the regime of culture defined by this logic might be Deleuze and Guattari's notion of an abstract machine.

51 Readings.

52 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (1994).

53 Edith J. Morley, *Herry Crabb Robinson in Germany 1800-1805*. I am grateful to Rachel Hall for her assistance.

54 Albert Lange, *The History of Materialism* 246-47 footnote. I am grateful to Rachel Hall for her assistance.

55 Especially, see Kant's *Physical Geography*. See also *Race and the Enlightenment*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (1997).

56 Jacques Revel, cited in Bauman 56.

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57 Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (1986).

SB Lotte, cited in Bauman 59.

59 Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (1991) 129.

60 I have written extensively about rock music. See Lawrence Grossberg, *Dancing In Spite Of Myself*. Notice that in my writing, I do not distinguish between rock and roll, and rock.

61 I do not want to claim that sonorality is pre-modern but I do want to claim that it is virtually countermodern.

62 Lutz Musner observes (via e-mail) that:

the logic of separation, fragmentation and negativity – which brings together capitalism and Kant – is less about the trajectories of time than about space. Space is always encoded, symbolically and emotionally, and space is the privileged domain of the popular. Space is the arena for everyday life and the (nontextual) meaning attached to it. The popular as a comprehensive set of symbolic and nondiscursive meanings and practices (including music) with which people organize survival and pleasure within limits confining their desires and pleasures is always inscribed into spaces and places (neighborhoods, pubs, music places, etc.) If you introduce the combined powers of Kantian epistemology and market capitalism you get a powerful device to change and to designify space, which means to mobilize and instrumentalize the people on a larger scale. "Time" might be more part of the "ideology of ideology" than of the real politics of modernization. "Time" belongs to the ideology of production and consumption; "space" belongs to the logic of expression and articulation. The textualization of spatial encodings allows the transformation of locations into entities, which can be modeled, controlled and manipulated, regardless of their specificities, their local connotations and their particular popular meanings for specific people.

Thus even de Certeau's apparent claim that the

popular is an art of timing has to be understood as being predicated upon a topological model of eventuality and the distribution of practices.

63 Meaghan Morris, "On the Beach," *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg et al. (1992) 467.

64 Dwight Conquergood, "Beyond the Text: Toward a Performative Cultural Politics" (1995).

65 Gilroy 77.

66 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1979) 93.

67 Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (1989) 2.

68 Here we would have to deal with the ambiguity of affect: as both an energetics of reality and a particular plane of effectivity.

69 See Moira Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality* (1996); Moira Gatens, "Through a Spinozist Lens: Ethology, Difference, Power," *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. Paul Patton (1996).

70 See Ammiel Alcalay, *After Jews and Arabs: Remaking Levantine Culture* (1993). Both Spinoza and Leibniz can be seen as premodern/postmodern (i.e., baroque) philosophers: Spinoza operating with a logic of explosion, Leibniz with a logic of implosion.

71 It is important to separate this discussion from Deleuze and Guattari's use of the category of mediators, where it actually functions as "intercessors."

72 See Todd May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchy* (1994); and *Reconsidering Difference* (1997).

73 Meaghan Morris, *Great Moments in Social Climbing: King Kong and the Human Fly* (1992) 36-37.

74 We need to distinguish between contemporary theorists who read Nietzsche through Kant, giving rise to various poststructuralist versions of social constructionism, and those who read Nietzsche through Spinoza and reject the logic of mediation tout court.

75 My own work (Grossberg, *We Gotta Get Out Of This Place*) used affect as a structured plane of effects (investment) which is the very possibility of



agency (of acting willfully). That is, affect is the plane on which any individual (persons and practices are the two most obvious forms of individuation) is empowered to act in particular ways at particular places. Affect describes the observable differences in how practices matter to, or are taken up by, different configurations of popular discourses and practices – different alliances (which are not simply audiences). But perhaps this makes affect sound too mental, for affect is both psychic and material; it demands that we speak of the body and of discursive practices in their materiality.

76 The virtual is real but not actual. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987).

77 Similarly, Peirce's notion of pure firstness clearly is outside of mediation, but Peirce also suggested, by reserving the notion of mediation for thirdness, that there was another form of expressivity – secondness – which does not fit the logic of mediation.

78 There is a second articulation which distributes and produces the relation of a nonrelation between form and substance, operating across both content and expression.

79 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 87.

80 Which are always effectuated by people.

81 I do not mean to suggest that these three aspects would provide a full or adequate description of a regime of signs. But I am assuming that these aspects can be disarticulated as it were from particular regimes. Charles Stivale has suggested to me that these three dimensions bear a close relationship to the notions of concepts, plane of immanence and conceptual personae respectively, as these are developed in Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*

82 Charles Stivale, "Of Hecceities and Ritournelles: Movement and Affect in the Cajun Dance Arena," *Articulating the Global and the Local: Globalization and Cultural Studies*, ed. Ann Cvetkovich and Douglas Kellner (1997).

83 Could we talk, for example, about that "primitive" sacred economy in which it is the sign itself

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which is the sacred Truth of being, in which to speak the word is to speak the Truth, in which the sign itself is that which is signified? (I am grateful to Karen Salamon for raising the issue of such sacred – Talmudic – regimes.)

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